

# OVERVIEW OF HEALTHY FOOD CERTIFICATION

Under [Section 10-215f](#) of the Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.), Healthy Food Certification (HFC) requires each board of education or governing authority for all public schools participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) to certify annually to the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) whether they will follow the Connecticut Nutrition Standards (CNS) for all foods sold to students separately from reimbursable meals in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) school nutrition programs. The CNS applies to all competitive foods offered for sale to students on school premises at all times from all sources including cafeterias, school stores, vending machines, fundraisers and any other sources of food sales to students.

- **“Sale”** means the exchange of foods and beverages for a determined amount of money or its equivalent, including tickets, coupons, tokens and similar items. This includes any activities that suggest a student donation in exchange for foods.
- **“School premises”** include all areas of the property under the jurisdiction of the local or regional board of education, the regional vocational-technical school system or the governing authority district or school.

Districts that choose to comply with the CNS receive 10 cents per lunch, based on the total number of reimbursable lunches (paid, free and reduced) served in the district in the prior school year. Information on the HFC requirements and a list of current HFC districts are available on the CSDE's [HFC](#) Web page.



## CONNECTICUT NUTRITION STANDARDS

The CSDE developed the CNS with input from the state nutrition standards committee. The CNS focuses on limiting calories, fat, saturated fat, sodium and added sugars, eliminating trans fat, and promoting more nutrient-rich foods such as fresh fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy, legumes and lean meats. These standards are based on current nutrition science and national health recommendations from the [Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#) and national health and nutrition organizations. For more information, see the CSDE's [CNS](#) Web page.

## FOOD EXEMPTIONS

Foods that do not comply with the CNS can only be sold to students on school premises if the local board of education or school governing authority votes to allow exemptions and the following criteria are met: 1) the sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend; 2) the sale is at the location of the event; and 3) the foods are not sold from a vending machine or school store. The **“school day”** is the period from midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day. An **“event”** is an occurrence that involves more than just a regularly scheduled practice, meeting or extracurricular activity, e.g., soccer games, school plays and school debates are events but soccer practices, play rehearsals and debate team meetings are not.

### FUNDRAISERS

Fundraisers held on school premises must comply with the CNS unless the board of education votes to allow exemptions and the fundraisers meet the three exemption criteria. Most fundraisers can be modified to comply with the HFC requirements, except for food sales during the school day, e.g., candy and bake sales. Districts can contact the CSDE for assistance in reviewing current fundraisers to determine if changes are needed. Foods that comply with the CNS can be sold as fundraisers at any time on school premises if the selling time frame complies with the [state competitive foods regulations](#) (Section 10-215b-23 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies) and the state statute to offer nutritious low-fat foods (C.G.S. Section 10-221p). For more information, see the CSDE's handout, *Food and Beverage Requirements for Fundraisers*, and *Guide to Competitive Foods in Schools*.

### FOODS GIVEN TO STUDENTS

HFC does not apply to foods given to students. "Given" means that foods are provided free of any charge (including the exchange of tickets, coupons and similar items) or suggested donations. If a fee is collected for foods "given" to students, these foods must comply with the CNS.

### HFC APPLICATION

All Connecticut public school districts that participate in the NSLP must submit the annual *Healthy Food Certification Statement – Addendum to Agreement for Child Nutrition Programs (ED-099)* to the CSDE by July 1 of each year. For more information, see the CSDE's [HFC Application Forms](#) Web page.

### RESOURCES

*Guide to Competitive Foods in Schools:*

[www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/deps/nutrition/cf/cfg.pdf](http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/deps/nutrition/cf/cfg.pdf)

Connecticut Nutrition Standards (CSDE Web page):

[www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2626&q=322422](http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2626&q=322422)

*Food and Beverage Requirements for Fundraisers:*

[www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/deps/nutrition/hfc/fundhfc.pdf](http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/deps/nutrition/hfc/fundhfc.pdf)

*Food and Beverage Requirements for School Stores:*

[www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/deps/nutrition/hfc/storehfc.pdf](http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/deps/nutrition/hfc/storehfc.pdf)

*Food and Beverage Requirements for Vending Machines:*

[www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/deps/nutrition/hfc/vendhfc.pdf](http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/deps/nutrition/hfc/vendhfc.pdf)

Healthy Food Certification (CSDE Web page):

[www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2626&q=322420](http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2626&q=322420)

List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages (CSDE Web page):

[www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2626&q=322432](http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2626&q=322432)



For more information, visit the CSDE's [Healthy Food Certification](#) and [Competitive Foods](#) Web pages or contact Susan S. Fiore, M.S., R.D., Nutrition Education Coordinator, Connecticut State Department of Education, Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education, 25 Industrial Park Road, Middletown, CT 06457, 860-807-2075, [susan.fiore@ct.gov](mailto:susan.fiore@ct.gov).

This handout is available at [www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/deps/nutrition/hfc/reqhfc.pdf](http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/deps/nutrition/hfc/reqhfc.pdf).

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